given a finding that Dr. Rakesh Saxena received adequate encouragement and help from iris colleagues and seniors in the discharge of his duties.

The police has registered a case and investigations are not yet completed.

Acquisition of Westland Helicopters

1239. SHRT ATAL BIHARI. VAJPAYEE: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 188 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 13th May, 1985 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Prime Minister had stated that the Government would not purchase (Westland Helicopters) from Britain due to certain technical defects in them and high costs of their running and maintenance;

(b) if so, the reasons for purchasing these helicopters later on and the number of helicopters purchased and at what cost;

(c) the facts regarding their high cost of maintenance and running and technical defects as per experience by Pawan Hans, which has got a fleet of Westland h li-copters in India; and

(d) the maximum time per day for which a Westland helicopter can be flown and actual average time per day for which it has been used as yet and the reasons for low utility period ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER): (a) and (b) At that time, the Prime Minister had expressed certain reservations regarding the capability of Westland helicopter to cater to the specific requirements of the oil sector and their being more expensive.

However, the subsequent flight tests carried out by experts cleared the Westland helicopters on the ground of 'zero risk' factor in the event of single engine failure during take off and pay load penalty. The higher operational cost was also off set by the grant of one-time' lump sum operating subsidy of £ 10 million.

An agreement for the purchase of 21 Westland helicopters along with spare engines, engine spares and ground handling and test equipment, etc. at a total cost of £ 70 million, has -been signed.

(c) Even though the Pawan Hans have had some teething problems on the induction of Westland helicopters into service, the same are not considered alarming. The costs of maintenance due to technical defects attributable to quality of material or manufacture defects are covered by the warranty clause in the purchase agreement.

(d) Presently, the Westland helicopters have been placed on lease with Oil Companies/State Governments by the Pawan Hans. The actual hours flown by these helicopters depend on the nature of opera-\ tion, terrain, availability of crew and flirht and duty time limitations etc. Depending upon the requirements, these helicopters h:: ve flown as much as seven hours in a day.

Abolition of octroi

1240. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHELA: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether all the State povernments have agreed on the abolition of octroi, one time payment of road-tax for vehicles and - establishment of a National Highway Authority; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof and the mechanics of the same and the State-wise progress so far made in this regard

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) and (b) The Transport Development Council has in its recent meeting held on 8th September, 1987, reiterated its recommendation to the State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to. abolish Octroi. The Council also urged for introduction of, by all the States Union Territory Administrations, a system of levy of one-time taxation on personalized vehicles, by 1-4-1988.

As of today, Octroi is not levied is Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal

desh, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Mizoram, Chandigarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Lakshadweep. The Government of Maharashtra have deci'lf' to abolish Octroi with effect from ? 1-5-J988.

The State Governments of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka have introduced onetime levy of road-tax on personalized vehicles. The States of Maharashtra and Punjab have introduced the same on certain categories of personalized vehicles. The others have initiated action.

As regards establishment of a National Highway Authority, the Government of India is considering a proposal to set up such an Authority. The proposal is in a preliminary stage..

Arrears of Telephone Bills

1241. SHRI SHANKER SINH VAGHE LA: Will the Minister of COMMUNI CATIONS bs pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question 1261 in Rajya Sabha on 5th August, 1987 and state what are the arrears of telephone bills as on October 31, 1987 towards" each of the Ex-M. Ps., former Ministers/Ex-Governors, and also the Political parties which are recognised by the election Commission at the Central/State levels ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SANTOSH MOHAN DEV): The information has been called for from all the units throughout the country and will be laid on the Table of the House as early as possible.

Pay parity of the Ayurvedic and Homoeopathic Doctors with Allopathic in C. G. H. S.

1242. SHRI LAL K. ADVANI:
SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE bs pleased to state-:

(a) whether the Fourth Pay Commission have recommended that degree holders in Ayurvedic and Homoeopathic systems should have the same pay-scales as of M. B. B. S. Doctors under the Central Govrernment Health Service and method of their recruitment should be on the same pattern;

(b) date on which this recommendation was received and what is the progress made so far; and

(c) when is the notification in this regard is likely to be issued ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (KUMARI SAROJ KHARPARDE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Fourth Pay Commission submitted their recommendations to the Government on 30-6-86.

(c) No definite date for issue of notification can be given at this stage as the matter' requires examination by differem Ministries,

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Loss of revenue due to suspension of trains in Tamil Nadu

1243. SHRI MUKHTIAR SINGF MALIK: Will the Minister of RAILWAY, ' be pleased to state:

(a) what is the estimated loss of revenu suffered by Railways due to the susperi sion of train services in Tamil Nadu fo 24 hours on the 24th October, 1987 fo' , rail blockade agitation called by th DMK; and

(b) what action Government have tak-; to improve the earning of Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF TH MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) Ra ways do not maintain figures of earnin train-wise and as such loss cannot be es mated

(b) The measures taken to increase 1 earnings of Railways include improvemi in the overall operating efficiency, bet utilisation of assets and carriage of ad tional traffic.